

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 084490
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TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

OAU COLLECTIVE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: OAU BOYCOTT OF DAVIS CUP MATCH

REFERENCE: STATE 79931

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WRITTEN BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JOSEPH D. DUFFEY TO PRESIDENT W.E. HESTER, JR. OF THE U.S.

TENNIS ASSOCIATION IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR FURTHER GUIDANCE.

WE HAVE ALSO COMMUNICATED WITH USTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,

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MICHAEL BURNS, JOSEPH CARRICO, CHAIRMAN OF THE U.S. DAVIS
CUP COMMITTEE AND STANLEY MALLESS, CHAIRMAN OF THE USTA
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

DEAR MR. HESTER: I WRITE TO INFORM YOU AND YOUR ASSOCIA-
TION OF A DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD AFFECT THE PARTICIPATION
OF AMERICAN ATHLETES IN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS COMPETITION.

AT A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY(OAU) LAST FEBRUARY, AFRICAN LEADERS URGED THEIR MEMBER STATES TO AGREE THAT THEY WOULD NO LONGER PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETIC EVENTS WITH COUNTRIES WHICH MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA IN THE SPORTS FIELD. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS NEW POLICY, IF ADOPTED BY THE FULL OAU SUMMIT MEETING IN JUNE IN GABON, COULD BE APPLIED

FOR THE FIRST TIME AGAINST THE U.S. AS A RESULT OF THE DAVIS CUP MATCH BETWEEN THE USA AND SOUTH AFRICA I SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS WEEK AT NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA. IF THIS POLICY WERE TO BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED THE BOYCOTT COULD PREVENT AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN ANY ATHLETIC EVENTS INVOLVING U.S. TEAMS.

WE HAVE INSTRUCTED EMBASSY OFFICIALS WHO ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY TO CONVEY OUR VIEW THAT A BLANKET BOYCOTT WOULD BE UNJUST. WE WILL STRESS THE PRIVATE CHARACTER AND AUTONOMY OF AMERICAN SPORTS GROUPS AND EXPLAIN, IN THIS CONTEXT, OUR APPROACH TOWARD THE SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEM IN ATHLETICS.

WE BELIEVE ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE OF THEIR GOVERNMENT'S POSITION. WE SHARE WITH MOST AFRICAN STATES THE BELIEF THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID SYSTEM REPRESENTS A GRAVE INJUSTICE TO BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS, WHO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION OF THAT COUNTRY. WE SEEK TO ADVISE U.S. SPORTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BODIES PLANNING TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETIC EVENTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE AUTHORITY OVER THE DECISIONS OF AMERICAN ATHLETIC GROUPS, SINCE U.S. ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES ARE ORGANIZED AND FUNDED BY PRIVATE CITIZENS.

FOR SPORTS GROUPS WHICH EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT THE POLICY THEY SHOULD FOLLOW WITH REGARD TO SOUTH AFRICA, WE EXPLAIN OUR GOVERNMENT'S OPPOSITION TO SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIAL POLICIES AND DESCRIBE HOW APARTHEID AFFECTS BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN SPORT. WE PASS ALONG THE EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS OF OTHER GROUPS, NOTING THAT SOME BELIEVE SPORTS COMPETITION WITH SOUTH AFRICA IS INAPPROPRIATE IN VIEW OF ITS RACIAL POLITICS, WHEREAS OTHERS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT AN INTELLIGENT AND CAREFULLY PLANNED POLICY OF ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE LIBERALIZATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN RACIAL PRACTICES.

WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO KEEP YOU INFORMED CONCERNING ANY
FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE AFRICAN POSITION,
AND WOULD WELCOME YOUR OWN VIEWS AND COMMENTS ON THIS
DIFFICULT SUBJECT.
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